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## THE FALSE HAIR.

AFTER every one has said his best about the advantages of unadornment, and the attractions of artless beauty—after paying the most devout homage to the natural, and denounced to the uttermost the flattering delusions of the artificial, it becomes rather difficult to know what we are to do next. It being granted that we are to wear clothes, why not the best clothes our purses can afford, and as graceful and becoming garments, 'though not expressed in fancy,' as our taste can suggest, or our tailor fashion for us? Admitting art as a helper and improver, and a handmaiden of nature, where are we to draw a line?—where are we to pause, and decline further aid from adventitious resources? I should like, if it were possible, a distinct code to be drawn up, setting forth how far one can receive assistance from artifice, and yet be legally natural. May one pad?—have one's hair curled?—use pomatum? An amusing paper by Lord Chesterfield in the *World*, introduces to us a country gentleman complaining of the extravagant use of paint by his wife and daughter. They both make answer, 'that red was not paint; that no colour in the world was *fard* (face-paint) but white, of which they protested they had none.' When ladies were in the habit of stuccoing their faces and necks with plaster of Paris fixed with size or oil (the white surface warranted to last in good repair for several days, provided they did not wash, which, of course, they did not), then, no doubt, the use of a little simple rouge was but a trivial offence; but now, when rouge is not generally the mode, what may we do without forfeiting our character for sincerity? May we, as honest men, wear glass-eyes or wigs, or cork-legs or composition-teeth, and resort to these appliances unavowedly? or are we bound to confess our imperfections, and boldly parade our fraudulence, with, 'The liquid hair-dye I use is So-and-so's,' or, 'I buy my glass-eyes at Such-a-one's.' Surely this cannot be necessary, although I admit, if the lady I pay my addresses to has the misfortune to have one of her legs made of cork, I should prefer to be apprised of the fact before I put up the bans, rather than after the marriage-ceremony. Perhaps she, too, has some claim to be made acquainted with the circumstance, that my prepossessingly natural appearance is not altogether free from a certain alloy of unreality. But we will let that pass.

For my own part, I was brought up in an unreal school; from early infancy I was familiar with the artifices of the toilet. My aunt, to whose care I was confided almost from the cradle, had been in

her youth what is called, I believe, a 'brilliant brunette.' Possibly she did not like to surrender all claim to that title, even at the time of which I am narrating. She was then a little thin old lady, of a pale dark complexion—the terms are quite reconcilable—with, in the morning, a spot the size of a crown-piece, of bright yellow on either cheek, the result, I believe, of a constant resort to pigments. She was partial to *blonde* caps, with a profusion of pink satin bows and bunches of flowers. She wore a front of dense black hair. With the idea, perhaps, of making this appear more natural, or as a reminiscence of a fashion of her youth, the parting of the hair was quite at the side, and brought across her brows in a bold sweep, leaving her forehead in a state of partial eclipse (very much as I have noticed sailors at Wapping wearing their hair), and ending on either side in little crisp coils of curls as tight, and hard, and regular as watch-springs. She had thick dark eyebrows, which she was rather proud of, and was fond of smoothing and flattening with the tips of her fingers. She was a *dressy* woman, and on great occasions would appear in the most gorgeous and glowing silks I ever recollect to have seen. She was particularly partial to a superb dress of orange trimmed with scarlet velvet. She had a notion that brunette brilliancy required to be associated with violent hues. Certainly, there was a barbaric splendour about this dress which would have been more commanding, perhaps, if it had imparted to her rather less of likeness to a macaw—her hooked nose giving additional force to that unfortunate similitude. Her diamond necklaces and earrings, and bracelets and finger-rings, were of magnificent nature, and I shall never cease to regret that at her demise, some years since, she willed them away from me to quite another and distant branch of the family. Well, my aunt had recourse to artifice in the most stanch and persistent way. She was fond of declaring that she was of the old school. She kept a pot of rouge always at hand in her work-box. When the knock of visitors was to be heard, up jumped my aunt. 'I must *titivate*,' she said. I don't know how she became acquainted with that word. I find, by reference to a slang dictionary, that it signifies 'to put in order, to dress up.' 'I must *titivate*.' Thereupon she produced the rouge-pot, a pocket-mirror, and a scrap of flannel. She was very short-sighted; she could not have thoroughly appreciated the intensity of the hue she rubbed on her cheeks. I should have called it ruddling rather than *titivating*. She turned to receive her visitors with a face, as it were, whole bound in scarlet.

Deception so apparent and avowed as this, can hardly be called deception at all. My aunt rouged

boldly, and her visitors knew it, and she knew that they knew it, and yet still she continued to apply the scrap of flannel; and her wig in the same way never aimed at deception—it confessed itself to be a sham at once. No purely natural head of hair could have looked anything like what that wig looked. It was a padded cushion of hair parted on one side, and worn by my aunt simply to keep her head warm, not, I should think, with the faintest delusive notions. Certainly, with me as a child under her care, all pretence at artifice was ostentatiously dispensed with; she rouged in my presence; she moved and removed her wig in my presence. She was rather a grim and formidable-looking woman with her heavy brows, her jet-black eyes, her crimson cheeks, and hooked nose, and especially impressive-looking when she wore her macaw ball-dress of orange satin; but she was really a good, kind-hearted old lady. She could not bear to utter an angry word to me, however severely my youthful misdemeanours might test her temper, much less could she bring herself to inflict upon me the slightest bodily pain, by way of punishment. To this, indeed, no amount of wrong-doing of mine could drive her. Her method of converting me to a proper sense of my duties culminated in the imposition of two penalties. If I persistently declined to be a good boy, my aunt solemnly avowed her determination first to take my shoes and stockings off; and if after that form of chastisement—a severe one, because it put limits to locomotion—I still persisted in misconduct, the next awful threat was, that she would take her wig off! Not often did my criminality draw down upon me this dire visitation. For many years, my young imagination could frame no other notion as to the personality of that nursery goblin Bogie, than was involved in the presentment of my aunt with her red cheeks and black brows, divested of her wig, and exposing to view a dreadful and shining bald head.

It was perhaps attributable to this early familiarity with artifice, that when, owing to—what shall I say?—well, a bad attack of cerebral fever, and the consequent loss of my hair, it became necessary to resort to the perruquier's, I did not shrink from the notion with any extraordinary repugnance. Brought up in the school I had been, the next natural thing to wearing one's own hair seemed to be the wearing of some one else's. I know that there are not wanting those who assert that fever had nothing to do with my case. I believe the supposition of my being liable in any way to brain fever was an especial joke with many; they were satisfied with the belief that it was Time only who had thinned my flowing locks, and that my hair had gone with my youth. However that may be, I would have the reader bear in mind that the unmarried man is always young—a cadet waiting promotion. The married man is, of course, the chief of a household—the head of a family; age is becoming to him; the more patriarchal and venerable he looks, the better, and so much the more credit he obtains. But with the celibate it is different. The French word *garçon* signifies at once a boy and a bachelor. The two are indeed synonymous—the bachelor is always a boy. So I purposed that the wig I should wear should be a young wig; a curly, free, pleasant-looking head of hair, that knew very little of the world—quite inexperienced—that had seen nothing of life at all—a single unmarried wig.

I confess to a certain shuddering sensation when the hairdresser threw a tape about my cranium, and took notes of its dimensions, exactly as though he were a tailor measuring it for a coat. 'Ave it tight to your 'ed,' he recommended; 'better 'ave it to fit tight to your 'ed. You'll find it more comfortable; and they will loosen, you see. But if you 'ave it tight at first, it allows for that, and you ain't so liable to accidents.' It was a dreadful phantom he conjured up in thus speaking of accidents. A picture rose

before me of a crowded thoroughfare—say Regent Street at noon—a stiff breeze blowing; then—the accident—my hat whirled from me, and ricochetting along the gutter—my wig whizzing through the air, and falling flat on the pavement like a brown pancake—the sun's laughing rays glittering on my bald exposed skull! The idea was very awful. 'Your 'ed down, sir, please. Will you 'ave it hover your hears, or hunder? Well, I should reckmend brought hover, with a sweet curl or two at the side.'

Fortunately for me, there was something at this moment transpiring in the room which diverted me from too morbid a regard for my own sufferings. An elderly gentleman was delivering himself into the hands of a tonsor. He presented a perfectly bald head to the operator. 'Take the ends off,' he said. It seemed almost as though he wanted his head cut, failing his hair. However, the hairdresser commenced a course of snipping and clipping. A calm, stolid man, he had seen no joke in haircutting for many a long year. He would have made-believe to dress the locks of a cricket-ball, if the job had come to him in the ordinary way of business; and have tucked the muslin shroud carefully round it, sticking it well in between the neck and the shirt-collar—supposing that the cricket-ball enjoyed such an ornament—to catch the supposititious falling ends of hair; and would have imperturbably asked the cricket-ball whether he would have it curled or shampooed, or subjected to any other ridiculous treatment. But, of course, it was not practicable to protract this farce beyond a certain limit. The hairdresser completed his task, carrying out the notion to the last that he had been cutting the elderly gentleman's hair, blowing violently round his neck, removing the muslin shroud with a great flourish, and plying a brush vigorously all over the elderly gentleman's dress. Suddenly the patient took something from his hat, and asked for some water. He wetted the something on the inside very carefully with his fingers; he put it on his head. It was a wig! He pulled, and patted, and pressed it down elaborately. Goodness! thought I, are wigs, then, ever stuck on the head like postage-stamps on a letter! He put his hat on carefully over the wig, taking heed that his side-curly should be compressed perhaps, but not crumpled. He straightened himself, struck his strutting legs jauntily with his dapper cane, and the elderly gentleman, humming an opera air, quitted the room a very young man indeed.

Did the young lady with the perennial smile and the glossy bands, who stood behind the shop-counter, her taper fingers busily employed in folding up pots of bears' grease in silver paper, know that he wore a wig, I wonder? Was she conscious that I had been measured for one? There was a brilliant light in her gray eyes, but not, I think, of satire—rather, I imagine, of increased admiration. She was no censor of the unreal—rather the presiding goddess of artifice; and her smiles seemed to say: 'Use hair-dye by all means; wear a "perfect gentleman's head of hair," or any toilet falsities you please—the more the better—so you will rise in my estimation.' I felt that this was very delicate and gratifying conduct of the young lady's, and I went home rather in love with her, and quite looking forward to my wig.

It came home in due time, with the bill of its cost. This struck me as high, but, of course, one cannot expect a first-rate head of hair for nothing. It came in a neat box, sealed. I was grateful for that precaution. It assured me that there could have been no tampering with the precious enclosure on the part of any member of my household. I trembled at the notion of my servant Mary fingering the wig, laughing over it, or of Buttons dragging it on his thickly thatched skull, and then making facetious grimaces in what he might possibly imagine to be imitation of some facial peculiarities of my own. No; as yet the

household knew nothing of my wig; of course, they must know it in time. And would they, knowing it, treat me with usual respect? Would they falter in their fidelity? Perhaps, I thought, it would be preferable at once to discharge my servants, and engage an entirely new staff, who would not entertain a suspicion that my hair was aught but my own in the strictest sense. I admit that I dreaded very much the sound of laughter from the kitchen.

I locked myself in my dressing-room. With trembling fingers, I broke the seals, and took it out. It looked very soft and glossy, curly and delicate. In my emotion, I found at first a difficulty in deciding which part was intended for the front of the head, and which for the back. At last I got it on properly, with much patting and pressing, gentle pulling and humouring. And I examined—I may almost say I cross-examined—my new aspect in the glass. I was a long time under examination. The first startling sense of novelty over, I began to like my wig very much: it was very elegant and graceful, and eminently youthful-looking. I conceded that it surpassed utterly the very best days of my natural hair. Still—but it must be, I thought, from my own consciousness of its unreality—somehow, it did not look very real. It was the best, perhaps, that art could do for me; but then it *was* art; it was dead hair; the perriquer could not invest his work with the Promethean fires of life. May I say that it looked dull and clotted, in spite of all its grace, and a little too tight all over, with here and there a too crisp curl, decidedly a counterpart of one of the watch-spring decorations of my aunt's front? And was not the parting rather preternaturally even? and was there not a distinct want of harmony between my old forehead and my new parting? I put my hat on over the wig, just as I had seen the elderly gentleman do at the hairdresser's. Yes, my appearance was indisputably effective with my hat on, and the curls came down from under my hat, sticking well on to my temples and cheeks in a very natural and agreeable manner.

But I felt that I was now the victim of a new anxiety, that a new responsibility had devolved upon me. My hands were incessantly rising to my wig to pat it, and ascertain that it still kept its right place. I could feel that it did. The hairdresser had made it quite as 'tight to the ed' as he had proposed, and I experienced the sensation of wearing a perpetual helmet, that fitted my skull so closely as nearly to bring tears into my eyes; but still I was never satisfied without the test of touch and examination in the glass. I was always putting to myself imaginary cases of annoyance arising out of my new acquisition. What was I to do with it at night? It would be too absurd going to bed in it, and a work of supererogation to attempt to deceive Morpheus by courting his benefits with false hair on. But where should I place it? I could not endure the appearance of it hanging on to a corner of my looking-glass, and imparting to my comfortable bedchamber the air of a red Indian's wigwam decorated with the scalp of a conquered foe. Should I lock it up? But then fancy an alarm of thieves or of fire! I might be compelled to face my household, or the public in the street, without it, time not permitting me to take it out of its place of safety; or if I left it too exposed, ready for immediate putting on, there was the risk of its being taken by the thieves, or consumed by the fire. Dreadful thought! Certainly, it was a great responsibility. I had become the trustee of a very important charge. And over all these morbid fears and phantoms, a terrible question surged: Will *she* know that I wear a wig? and, knowing it, will she reject my suit? And then the memory came to me of a cruel trick I, a school-boy, had played upon a French usher wearing a wig, when, by means of a fish-hook and a line, I had twitched his false hair yards away from him. How enraged he

had been—in what vehement broken English, the tears in his eyes the while, he had rebuked my shameful conduct! What, now, thought I, if a retributive justice should deal to me a similar doom? I thought, and shivered!

With some forebodings, I determined to test my wig in public. Was it fancy? or was Mary really tittering as she followed me down stairs, cramming her apron into her mouth? I passed out into the street. I examined carefully the faces of all I met, to see if I could discover any consciousness of my wig on the part of the public. I was careful to avoid any *rencontre* with street-boys; I gave them the wall, and treated them with the utmost courtesy, for I knew I was in their power, if they knew all. I was tolerably satisfied altogether with my promenade. One boy certainly thrust his tongue in his cheek in rather a significant way; but I could not be sure that the proceeding was levelled at my wig. Robinson, whom I met in Piccadilly, seemed to me to wear a needless grin of inquiry on his face, but I am not prepared to say that he had detected it. Still, all this was with my hat on.

Let me hurry to a close. I sought a further test; I visited the pit of a theatre. In the course of the evening, some slight accident—I forget now what—occurred on the stage. Many of the audience rose from their seats to obtain a better view; I did so, amongst others. Certain of the spectators were indignant at this. There arose the customary cries—'Down, in front!—sit down!'

Something prompted me to disregard these warnings. They were repeated.

'Sit down, old 'un! Can't you hear?' (Sensation.) Could it be that some ribald objector was referring to me? I still forbore to obey.

'Sit down, can't you? YOU IN THE WIG!' (Loud laughter.)

I sat down *then*. I took advantage of the next fall of the drop-scene to creep quietly, perhaps guiltily, from the theatre. I was detected, undone. 'She will know it's a wig!' I said.

I went home; I lit a fire, and *burned my wig* that night: and I went to bed, pained, it may be, but yet intensely relieved.

#### MATRIMONIAL LAW.

PRIOR to the year 1754, marriages were of three different kinds.

The first was the marriage in the face of the church, by virtue of bans proclaimed on three separate holydays, or by a licence dispensing with such bans. Such a marriage was solemnised by a clergyman in the parish church, between the hours of eight and ten in the morning; and if either of the parties were under the age of twenty-one, the consent of the parent or guardian was required. The licences were of two kinds—the ordinary or surrogate's, and the special licence. The power of granting the latter was formerly vested in the pope; but in Henry VIII.'s time, it was transferred to the archbishop of Canterbury, who has ever since retained that exclusive privilege. It is only granted to persons of the rank of peers or peeresses in their own right, their sons and daughters, dowager-peeresses and privy-councillors, the judges of Westminster Hall, baronets, knights, and members of parliament, although His Grace is not barred from granting occasional favours beyond these specified limits. By virtue of this licence, a marriage may be solemnised at any time or place.

The second kind of marriage was the clandestine marriage, for the celebration of which no publication



of bans or licence was required. It could be entered into at any time and place, the only requisite being that it should be celebrated by a clergyman. By this method, a man in a drunken frolic might agree to marry a woman of the worst character, and if there were a parson near at hand, the marriage might be there and then celebrated without further delay or ceremony. The parsons of the old Fleet prison and of May Fair were noted for their celebration of these clandestine marriages; and it appears that Hampstead was not less remarkable for conveniences of that kind, to couples who wished to increase their happiness by a little air and exercise.

But the old Fleet had the greatest amount of business and reputation in matrimonial matters. On the outside of the prison, touters used to be employed to obtain business for the parsons within; passengers were saluted with the question: 'Sir, will you walk in and be married?' and a board was put up on one of the walls of the prison, on which was painted a male and female hand conjoined, with the words, 'Marriages performed within' written beneath. Whenever a marriage was performed, the parson took the fees, allowing a portion to the touters and the tavern-keepers, who, besides sharing in the fees, derived a profit from the sale of liquor drunk at the wedding. Occasionally, when business was brisk and flourishing, a publican would keep a parson on his own premises, at a salary of about a pound a week. The fee paid to the parson was about five or six shillings—small in amount certainly, but it must be borne in mind that the number of marriages was very large. Parson Wyatt's receipts for one month were nearly £58. Keith married 6000 couples in one year in his chapel in the Fleet, while a neighbouring church had but 50 during the same period.

On payment of a small fee, marriages could be antedated, or not entered at all; people could be married without declaring their names; and for half a guinea, a marriage might be registered that never took place. It was by no means an unusual practice for women to hire temporary husbands at the Fleet, in order that they might be able to plead coverture to an action of debt, or for worse purposes. These hired husbands were provided by the parson, who charged five shillings for the accommodation. Nor were these marriages confined to the lower orders. Lord Ellesmere and other noblemen adopted this method. The Duke of Richmond was married to the beautiful Miss Gunning by a Fleet parson, and in such a hurry were they to have the ceremony performed, that, not having time to obtain an ordinary wedding-ring, one of the rings from the window-curtains was used for the purpose. The son of Lord Holland was married in the Fleet to the daughter of the Duke of Richmond.

By these clandestine marriages, heirs of good families were seduced and engaged in infamous matrimonial contracts; rich heiresses were carried off by men of low birth, or sharper; the best families were brought into distress, and their sons and daughters involved in ruin; a number of expensive lawsuits were occasioned about the legitimacy of children; great difficulty was experienced in ascertaining whether the parents were married or not; sometimes a clandestine marriage was set up after a man's death, which was never heard of in his lifetime, and his whole effects were carried away from his relations by the children of a woman whom he had never acknowledged as his wife. At last, the enormous increase of these irregular practices led to the introduction of the Marriage Act of Lord Hardwick, which was received with a great amount of opposition, and only passed with great difficulty. The interval between the passing of the bill and its coming into operation afforded a rich harvest to the parsons of the Fleet and May Fair. In one register-book there are entered 217 marriages, which took place at the

Fleet on the 25th March 1754, the day previous to the act coming into operation. Although after that date clergymen solemnising clandestine marriages were liable to be transported, yet such marriages were kept alive at the Savoy Chapel for a couple of years longer, when a minister and his curate having been transported for fourteen years, under the Act, an effectual stop was put to them.

The third kind of marriage was the consensual one, or that by mere consent. Any contract made by words of the present tense, as 'I marry you,' and in case of cohabitation, of the future tense also, as, 'I will marry you,' was deemed a valid marriage for many purposes, and the parties might afterwards be compelled by the Ecclesiastical Court to celebrate it in the face of the church. The consensual form of marriage, although frequently used, was never looked upon with favour, for it sometimes produced effects which were truly lamentable. For instance, in one case, the scion of a noble house, entangled by a verbal contract of marriage with a woman of disrepute, and of very inferior station to himself, endeavoured to get rid of his engagement by paying her a certain sum of money. Fancying himself then at liberty, he married a lady of his own rank in a regular and open manner. The marriage was followed by the birth of children; when the woman with whom the verbal contract had been made suddenly appeared in the Ecclesiastical Court, and not only set aside the second marriage, thereby bastardising the children of the second wife, but compelled the unfortunate young man to celebrate the first marriage with her in the face of the church.

By Lord Hardwick's Act of 1754, all previous laws relating to marriages were repealed, with the exception of those relative to special licences, and it was enacted that all marriages must thereafter be solemnised by a clergyman in the parish church by virtue of either bans or licence. The bans were to be proclaimed on three separate holydays, after which the parties were to be married in the presence of two witnesses, besides the officiating minister, and all the parties were afterwards to sign the register. It was argued by the gentlemen who opposed the Act, that marriage by bans was against the genius and nature of Englishmen; that it shocked the modesty of a young girl to have it proclaimed throughout the parish that she was going to be married. Horace Walpole, in a letter to Mr Conway, said: 'It is well you are married. How would my Lady A— have liked to be asked in the parish church for three Sundays running? I really believe she would have worn her weeds for ever rather than have passed through so impudent a ceremony.' Another honourable gentleman said he could see no reason why the parish should be told so often, and in such a solemn and public manner, that there is a marriage intended between John the ploughman and Molly the dairymaid.

With regard to marriages by licence—which were too expensive for ordinary people—where either of the parties were minors, and had not been married before, the marriage could only be solemnised with the previous consent of the person authorised to give the same. The persons to give the requisite consent were the father, or, if he were dead, the guardian lawfully appointed; and if there were no such guardian, the mother, if unmarried; and if there were no such mother, then a guardian appointed by the Court of Chancery. The marriage was void *ab initio*, if it were solemnised without such consent; an enactment which was productive of the greatest hardship and injustice. For instance, in a case mentioned in the old law reports, the father had deserted his wife and family, and had gone to America; and many years afterwards, the wife, naturally supposing her husband to be dead, gave her consent to the marriage of her son, who was a minor. Twenty years after the solemnisation of the son's marriage, the father turned up, instituted a suit in the Ecclesiastical Court, the consequence of

which was that the son's marriage was declared *void*, for the want of the father's consent at the time of its celebration. A minor who had no parents, or guardian appointed by them, had to incur the expense of obtaining the appointment of a guardian by the Court of Chancery, before he could be married by licence; and in the case of an illegitimate minor, such a guardian only could give consent to his marriage. By this doctrine of consent, young women were often entrapped into marriages which might at any time afterwards be annulled, whenever the husband might think proper to take the necessary steps. Let us take an instance: a woman being a minor at the time of the marriage, the husband obtained the licence by taking oath that she was of age; was married to her, and had issue, several children; when, being in great poverty and distress, the husband left his wife, and went to India, where he realised a considerable fortune. He returned to England, and after his marriage had subsisted for twenty-seven years, instituted a suit for nullity of marriage, on the ground of his wife having been a minor at the time of her marriage, and he succeeded in his suit!

Lord Hardwick's Act, which at the time of its passing was deemed a national calamity, was attempted to be repealed by Mr Fox; but the effort was fruitless, and the act continued in operation until 1823, when the Marriage Act of George IV. was passed. By this act, which is still in operation, marriages may be either by bans, or by licence dispensing with such bans. The bans are to be published in the church where the marriage is to be solemnised, upon three separate Sundays preceding the solemnisation of marriage, during the time of morning-service, or evening-service; if there be no morning-service, immediately after the second lesson. If the parties reside in different parishes, the bans must be published in each. Seven days at least before the first publication, the parties to be married must deliver to the minister of the church where the bans are to be published, a notice in writing of their true Christian and surnames, of their respective places of residence, and the time during which they have been residing in the parish. It is not imperative on the minister to demand this notice, and if he knows the parties, he will generally waive it; but if he do so, he will be personally responsible for any possible consequences that may arise. The form of the notice may be obtained from the minister or his clerk.

The bans must be duly published, otherwise the marriage will be invalid. They must properly designate the persons intending to be married, in order to awaken the vigilance of parents and guardians, and to give them an opportunity of protecting their rights. The true names should therefore be given; for if the publication be such as to conceal rather than designate the parties, it is no publication, and the marriage will consequently be void. The true names are those of baptism and native surnames. Names of repute in bans have been sometimes held to be sufficient, especially where the true names were but little known and used. The omission of a dormant name is immaterial, but it is otherwise with one by which the person is commonly called. For instance, the Honourable Augustus Henry Edward Stanhope was usually called 'Augustus,' to the entire exclusion of his other Christian names; and he having been married by bans in which he was described as Edward Stanhope only, his marriage was declared void. The like result ensued where William Peter Smith was designated in the bans as William Smith only, and the second Christian name was the one by which he was known, and which was intentionally omitted, for the purpose of concealment. It must be borne in mind, however, that both parties must have been aware of the undue publication of bans, in order to make a marriage by them invalid. The act of one will not operate to the prejudice of another, unless a participator. The

residence of the parties must also be correctly stated in the bans, and it is the duty of the minister to ascertain if this be done. If he discover any inaccuracy, he is bound not to proceed with the ceremony; but if the marriage be once solemnised, that fact will override all inaccuracies concerning residence. The marriage must take place within three months next after the publication of the bans, otherwise fresh publication will be required.

The issuing of the special licence by the archbishop of Canterbury is not affected by the act of George IV., but has remained unaltered since the time of Henry VIII. Before any ordinary or surrogate licence can be issued, one of the parties must personally swear, before the person granting it, that he or she believeth that there is no impediment of kindred or alliance, or of any lawful cause, nor any suit commenced in any Ecclesiastical Court, to prevent such marriage; and that one of the parties has resided for fifteen days in the parish within which the marriage is to be solemnised; and where either of them, not being a widower or widow, are under the age of twenty-one, that the proper consent has been obtained. The licence is only available for the diocese in which it is issued, and is only in force for three months. The same strictness with reference to the names of the parties is not required in licences as in bans, because the former are not intended for publication. A marriage by licence under a false name is valid if there be no mistake as to the person. By the Marriage Act of George IV., the penalty of nullity of marriage was confined to the cases of persons wilfully consenting to the celebration of marriage without publication of bans, or without licence, or by any one but a minister in holy orders, or elsewhere than in a church or licensed chapel; and in the case of minors, where the marriage is once solemnised, the want of previous consent will not invalidate it.

The Marriage Act of George IV., although admitted to be a great improvement on the previous one, did not give general satisfaction, for, as will have been already perceived, it was applicable exclusively to marriages by the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England. The dissenters were left unnoticed, and it was not until thirteen years afterwards—namely, in the year 1836—that Lord John Russell's Act afforded them legislative relief, and at the same time improved the general law of marriage. This act has, in its turn, been amended in sundry points of detail, but we shall notice them altogether. By the Act of 1836, two new methods of getting married were introduced—namely, by the superintendent registrar's licence, and by his certificate. To obtain the former, one of the parties about to be married must give notice of such being his intention to the superintendent registrar of marriages of the district in which the person giving the notice resides. In this notice—a form of which may be obtained at any registry-office—the names and condition, rank or profession, ages, dwelling-places of the parties, are truly set forth, together with the name of the church or building in which the marriage is to take place, and the district and county in which the parties respectively dwell. To this notice is attached a declaration by the person giving it, that he or she has resided in the superintendent registrar's district for fifteen days immediately preceding the giving of the notice, and that where consent is required, that such consent has been obtained. One clear day's notice only is required, so that where it has been given on Monday, the marriage may take place on the Wednesday following, or at any other time within three months after the issuing of the licence, in the church, chapel, or building mentioned in the notice. Marriage by the superintendent's licence cannot be solemnised in any church or chapel of the Established Church of England, while, on the other hand, it may take place at the registry-office, in the presence of the superintendent registrar and a

registrar of marriages, and two other witnesses, without any religious ceremony whatever.

The superintendent registrar's certificate is obtained in a similar manner: seven days' residence previous to the giving of the notice is required, and it is suspended in the registry-office for twenty-one days before the certificate will be issued. To obtain the superintendent registrar's licence, where the parties reside in different districts, only one notice is required; but to obtain a certificate under such circumstances, notice must be given in both districts. The certificate is equivalent to the publication of bans, and entitles the parties obtaining it to be married in any church or chapel of the Church of England, as well as in any place in which the superintendent registrar's licence avails; but the marriage must take place within three months after the issuing of the certificate. Where a marriage by certificate is intended, and one of the parties lives in Ireland, a similar notice of marriage may be given there; and where one of the parties resides in Scotland, a certificate of the proclamation of bans should be obtained, which has the same effect as an ordinary superintendent registrar's certificate.

The consent required in all the above cases is that of a father, or, if the father be dead, then of a guardian lawfully appointed by him; if there be no such guardian, then of the mother unmarried; if there be no such mother, then of a guardian appointed by the Court of Chancery. We may mention, moreover, for the benefit of minors with unwilling and unfeeling parents or guardians, that where the person whose consent is required is insane, or where such person, being a mother or guardian, is abroad, or unreasonably or from undue motives withholds consent to a proper marriage, the Court of Chancery will, on application, afford proper relief.

Marriages by special licence can take place at any time, but all other kinds of marriages are invalid unless solemnised between the hours of 8 and 12 A.M. In Scotland, there are two kinds of marriages—regular and solemn, or irregular and clandestine. To procure a regular marriage, it is necessary that bans should be published three times on three Sundays or holydays immediately before divine service. On extraordinary occasions, the last two, and even all the publications, may be made in one day. A certificate of the due proclamation of bans is granted by the clerk of the kirk-session, upon which the marriage is celebrated by the parish minister before two witnesses, and usually at the house where the woman resides. There is no further ceremony than the question of mutual acceptance put by the minister and answered by the parties, and a declaration by the minister that the parties are married.

An irregular marriage may be contracted by words of the present tense, or by words of the future tense, if followed by cohabitation. The consent of the parties, which is the essence of the contract, and which, followed by cohabitation, is sufficient to constitute a marriage, may be expressed before a civil magistrate, or even before witnesses; nor is it required that a clergyman should assist or be present, but the expressions of consent must necessarily be of a matrimonial intent. The Gretna Green marriages were of the irregular kind, and existed until the beginning of the year 1857, when an act of parliament came into operation, which enacted that, after that date, no irregular marriage in Scotland will be valid unless one of the parties had at the date thereof his or her usual place of residence there, or had lived in Scotland twenty-one days next preceding such marriage. English couples rushing to Scotland are therefore now obliged to take time before they venture on the most important step in their life—a step on which their happiness or misery depends so much.

The public cohabitation of parties as husband and wife in Scotland is presumptive proof that they are validly married, in the event of its not being distinctly

proved that they did not intend to contract matrimony. This is commonly known by the name of marriage by habit and repute.

### BATHS OF LUCCA.

AMONG 'things not generally known'—a tolerably large list—may be classed the baths of Lucca, a watering-place as highly esteemed by the Italians as ever was Harrogate by the Yorkshireman, or Baden by the Rhinelander. Beautifully situated among the spurs of the Apennines, in one of the fairest nooks of North Italy, this Tuscan Brunnen can boast of a lovely landscape, air wonderfully pure and dry, skies of astonishing azure, and baths first discovered and patronised by the toga-wearing masters of the world. The Romans, who had an extraordinary appreciation of the virtues of mineral springs, and who were the true explorers of almost every European spa, were tempted, in the instance of the baths of Lucca, not by healing waters, but by hygienic mud. In fact, the baths are supplied with a never-ceasing flow of warm, rich, mineralised mud, in which modern Italians wallow with great apparent refreshment. The long and narrow valley in which the Bagni are built, is walled in on each hand by mountain-peaks of the most jagged and serrated character, on the tops of the highest of which the snow glimmers like a silver helmet. The rocks in the high Apennines near the valley afford a rare treat to the geologist, and a perfect feast of colour to the painter, so wondrously are the greens and browns, and reds and blues, contrasted with black basalt and milk-white quartz. There are great precipices, here and there, of a thousand feet or so in sheer height, where the layers of many-coloured rock lie in regular streaks, like some marvellous mosaic; the effect of which seems unreal from its very brilliancy. But the valley, flanked by these mighty walls, is of anything but a barren character, irrigated as it is by a hundred tiny rills, that gush from among the shrub-fringed cliffs, and swell the swift broad stream that roars and foams down its shingly bed, on its rapid way to the sea.

Lucca itself, the Bagni—for I do not speak of the ancient city, a feebled town a dozen miles off—consists of three villages, about a mile and a half apart from one another: the Bagni Alla Villa, where the hot mud-baths are, and where there are spacious buildings over these medicinal founts—some for rich or paying patients, and some for poor or non-paying sufferers; the Ponte al Seraglio, where the great hotels and shops are; and the Bagni Caldi, on the crown of a tremendous hill, where the grand-ducal palace is situated. Past the first two rushes the broad foamy river, roaring, after rain, like Niagara itself. Strange streams, truly, are those Italian and Iberian rivers, where one day you see parties of washerwomen groping among the dry shingles of the enormously wide channel for a thread of water in which they can lave those mountains of dingy linen; and the next morning, lo! a tawny flood rolls by you, wide as some great navigable stream, and roaring hoarsely, as its angry brown billows lift their white-flaked heads above the turbid surface. Of the three divisions, the first two, the Villa and the Ponte, are rivals. The Villa has the baths, has the 'Polizio'—no unimportant institution in that old-world, down-trodden Italy that I remember—has some fair shops, and a market-place, and the church, with its relics, belfry, and quaint antiquities. On the other hand, the Ponte is more modernised, more in accordance with the nineteenth century. Has it not the circulating libraries, and Mrs Cordon's amazing emporium—where you can buy anything that has been invented in any land to delight the palate of man—and the casino, or public assembly-rooms, and the fashionable Florentine confectioners and milliners, where alone you can get a basin of soup or a Paris bonnet? Has it not, also, Pagnin's



excellent bevy of hotels?—three hotels, all belonging to one proprietor, all large, all cool, and all most admirably comfortable! But although the military band played at the Ponte—although the balls and concerts took place at the Ponte—although, if you had fancy for iced Milan beer, or a peep at Galignani's news from the outer world, or a pair of kid gloves, or other vanities, you were fain to repair to the Ponte, yet the Villa maintained a good fight for superiority. Was it nothing to have the representatives of church and state, the police commissary and the cura, within its limits? Was it nothing to possess the mud-springs, and the patients, and the lodging-houses, and the market, and the extraordinary little shops, where the stock-in-trade consisted of highly coloured pictures of miracles, saints with blue mantles and golden aureoles, reliquaries, breviaries, crucifixes, rosaries, blessed and unblest, of every material, from gold or rubies, down to plain coral or ivory for the middle class, and to the strung nuts, or wooden beads, which the poorest peasant of the hills is never without? As for the Bagni Caldi, it had hot springs—of water, not mud; and the grand duke's summer residence was there, but very few less distinguished dwellings. In fact, the hill on which the 'Caldi' was built was so terribly high and steep, that it was a painful sacrifice to friendship even to pay a call there, unless the caller rode up on pony-back. I never could guess why the sovereign of Tuscany lived in so aerial a situation, unless it were to be out of the way of his *carissimi sudditi*—and, indeed, it was a very distrustful dynasty. The grand duke was not hateful to his people as the Neapolitan tyrant is hateful. A passive dislike, rather to the system than the man, was pretty general; and educated folks remembered by what prodigies of perjury H. R. H. had kept the Florentines quiet, in 1849, until his Austrian relatives were at leisure to pour in a few columns of their white-coated soldiery. But no one dreamed of harming the prince; the duchess, whose manners were pleasing, was rather popular; and the mildness of the Tuscan race has passed into a proverb. Yet, living among that gentle people, Leopold thought it necessary to hedge himself in with as many precautions as if every second man he met had a hand-grenade in his pocket. The grand-ducal carriage had not only its outriders, and its file of tall lackeys, but its perpetual escort of cavalry. Dragoons galloped before it, after it, beside it, on every occasion; the illustrious family were almost hidden by the sabres and shakoos of their utterly useless protectors; and foot-soldiers, with loaded muskets, were actually stationed on bridges, and other spots along the roads, to save the ruler of Tuscany from the regicidal fury of a mild, orderly, kindly population, who only stared and saluted. Even the little princes and princesses went out for an airing on their donkeys, escorted not only by tall whiskered footmen, and ditto governess, but by a corporal's guard of musketeers, whose duty was to save these tiny scions of Hapsburg from the assaults of an enraged democracy.

The grand duke did not contribute much to the enjoyment of the baths, except that the splendid band of the body-guard used to play in the open air, at the Ponte, in the centre of a ring of carriages. But the prince was a thrifty man; and even at Florence, in winter, he gave no more entertainments than could be helped. Half-a-dozen balls at the 'Pitti,' and a few diplomatic dinners, exhausted the hospitable capacity of the late ruler of Tuscany. But Lucca was anything but dull; though the old residents, who recollected the short sway of the holiday queen of Etruria, or those who remembered the place under the genial despotism of the Duke of Lucca, sighed over the bright days of the past. And, indeed, a great and salutary change had come over the place, since, under the House of Este, it was the grand centre and vortex of gambling, intrigue, and dissipation. Once, that pretty casino resounded from noon to midnight with the chink of the gold pieces

rained broadcast on the green-covered altar of Fortune; and the deserted city of old Lucca had one of the best operas in Europe, and a Cercle equal to Frascati; and knaves and dupes, and hybrids that were both knaves and dupes, crowded from every land to stake their all upon the black and red, exactly as they do at Homburg in this present time. All that is over now. The grand duke suppressed the play-tables, at the request of England and France, when Lucca became a Tuscan province; and the frescoed casino is only used as a ball-room, with card and reading rooms thereunto annexed. There is no lack of social intercourse at Lucca. Among the thousands of well-dressed people who saunter along its promenades, listening to the music, or slowly drive in open carriages along its cicada-haunted avenues, are gay folks from every nation—British, Russian, French, but more especially Italian. From Naples, Rome, Milan, Turin, Florence, there is annually a great gathering of the languid, dark-haired dandies, and colourless, bright-eyed dames of the great old Houses of Italy. There you hear the names of the Colonnas and Orsini, of the Negri and the Doria, until the imagination flies back to the Italy of the Dark Ages. There, too, are ladies equally pale, and gentlemen equally languid, who make comparisons between Saratoga springs and the Bagni di Lucca, not always to the advantage of the latter; and if Peabody is a less euphonious name than Doria, or General Aristides Spry is scarcely as fraught with romantic associations as Pamphili or Savelli, still it must be owned that the Americans eclipse all competition in the items of dress and dollars. How wonderfully bedizened are those transatlantic belles, to be sure! Their milliners' bills would be worth preservation among the national archives. What with lace, silk, jewels, feathers, and embroidery, New York, it is evident, must be a famous customer to Paris. Then what dashing equipages, what satin-skinned saddle-horses, what powdered lackeys, on the plated buttons of whose livery-coats glimmers the Peabody crest, or the Spry coat of arms—three squirrels rampant, proper, on a field *or*; or a racoon *gules* between rifles sable, on a field *argent*—as far as one can judge. Have they a Herald's College in Cincinnati, I wonder, or do the fancy stationers play the part of a garter king-at-arms? At anyrate, it is charming to see the contest in a continental watering-place between the Russians and our Yankee kinsfolk. Both nations are lavish of expenditure, gorgeous of taste, and as richly dressed as Paris can contrive for them; both belong to countries comparatively new; and both come to stay, not so much a certain number of weeks, as to spend a fixed amount of dollars, generally the savings of years. They are rivals in everything; they dazzle the shopkeepers and peasants. That old-world monster, the Milord Anglais, is thoroughly outshone and put out of court now-a-days. As for the Italian nobles, those who *have* great fortunes seldom spend a tenth of them. You are often surprised to hear that yonder snuffy old man, in the brown coat and buff shoes, is a *principe* with a hundred thousand a year; or that such-and-such an old lady, in a medieval silk, is proprietor of a dozen villages in Romagna or Calabria, is descended from the Borgias or the Sforzas, and could, if she chose, subsidise an army. These people are thrown utterly into the shade by the brilliant competition between St Petersburg and New York. Of these two, Russia bears the palm for jewels, I should say; in dress and equipage, the rivals are equally matched; but in spite of the bearded chasseurs and flat-nosed attendants imported from Malorossia, the New World has the lead in liveries. America, whose only choice at home lies between Irish 'helps' and negro 'boys,' here revels in tall footmen, and exults in plush and powder. To send to London for a supply of the most gigantic Jeanees procurable for money, and to deck them out in blue and crimson

and peach colour, in shoulder-knot and epaulet, and bouquet of price, is alone worth the voyage in the eyes of Mrs General Spry.

As may be supposed, there are plenty of parties in the pretty marble-floored villas, each nestling in its bower of orange-trees; and though the summer climate be too hot for much walking by day, it is delicious to walk home at midnight along the silent roads, with the starry sky above, and the fireflies glancing all around through the shades like a million of tiny bluish lamps, and not a sound except a stray nightingale and the 'shrill cicadas' on the lime-trees overhead. A little care is necessary, though, by the dim starlight, to avoid treading on the plump toads and giant striped snakes that hop, and crawl, and glide about the roads after dusk in surprising numbers. Strange that such a pretty nook of earth, where the roses in especial seem to start up like weeds from the teeming soil, where many villas have an actual avenue of tall rose-trees leading to their marble steps, up which avenue of roses I always fancied Beauty walking to the Beast's palace—strange that it should so abound with reptile life. But it does. I used to find the blindworm beside all the streams; the toads were always blobbing their ungraceful rotund forms in one's path; and as for snakes, harmless but lengthy and obtrusive animals, they seemed to hide in every thicket along the roads. The fireflies were in wonderful numbers; their fairy lamps blazed every fine night, and the nights were always fine. I began at one time to fancy the climate absolutely a rainless one when two months had passed without a shower. By that time, the air had become so clear, crisp, and dry, that its elasticity seemed gone; the very peasants grumbled at the heat; the sun shone through a hot haze of dust, and all green things seemed to grow withered from excess of sultriness, as though kiln-dried. In early June, the climate of that narrow valley, where the sun vanishes early behind mountain-tops, was the true spring of the poets, the verdant spring of Arcadia. But a couple of rainless months made a wondrous alteration. The natives grew sallow; the rosy faces, fresh from England, got paler and more sickly every day; the Americans had hardly vitality enough left to support them through a cream-ice and a quadrille; and the Italian nobility seemed to be always asleep. Indeed, it is surprising how much of every day those southerners can fill up with sleep. The siesta is a habit which old residents always fall into, whatever their race. Pay a visit at 2 P.M., and you will find your friend's house darkened and still, masters and servants in bed, and the very household pets asleep; while if some yawning servitor does come down, half-dressed, it is to inform you, in a drowsy way, that you are requested not to disturb the nap of the establishment. In that wonderfully hot weather, people slept like the Seven Sleepers. Everything drooped, except the olives, which cannot be too hot, and the cicadas, whose shrill chirrup of aggravating loudness grew more deafening daily, as if the tiny imps were salamanders basking in their element of fire. In August, however, came a thunder-storm, with its heavy patter of broad flat rain-drops; and the birds, and the flowers, trees, crops, everything revived into pristine greenness; even the people rushed frantically out of their houses, and stood in the open street to be rained upon, like thirsty geraniums!

Two or three Lucchese peculiarities are worth noting. Not so much the consumption of ice, for that is the case all over Italy. Iced beer, and wine, water, lemonade, even coffee and punch, are necessities of life there. But when I say 'ice,' I ought to say 'snow.' They have no block-ice; but they store snow in pits on the tops of very lofty mountains, and cover it with straw and branches, and bring it down in carts, screened from the sun by mats and blankets. Snow is certainly colder than ice, and for some

purposes, more convenient. Then, at Lucca, everybody rides or drives. Not only are there more carriages kept by the visitors than would be the case anywhere in the northern parts of Europe, but the poorest peasant seems to possess a cart and horse, or at the worst, a tall mule, all over red tassels, and worsted trappings, and gilt nails, and bells, and other bravery. A poor fellow who lives on water-melons and rice, who sleeps in a hovel, and does not taste meat except on his patron saint's day, still clatters into market in his light *barrochino*, with a lean, gaily harnessed horse, tearing along at twelve miles an hour, and flogging him like a demon the while, for Italians, like negroes, are merciless horse-masters. There is one very pleasant peculiarity of the place—the moonlight or torch-light picnics, which take place at midnight on the tops of the mountains, and which are among the chief amusements. Very picturesque is the sight of a long line of ponies, mules, and donkeys, with their riders in light summer dresses, winding, in Indian file, along the broken and narrow path that leads up some craggy mountain, a blaze of yellow torch-light falling on rock and tree, and a band of hardy mountaineers with poles, guiding, assisting, carrying baskets of provender, and flambeaux, and pails of the indispensable snow, without which no champagne would be endurable. I could say more, for my subject is far from exhaustion; I have given, in fact, the briefest sketch in which I could hope to do anything like justice to one of the sweetest of all European places of resort. But though I should paint on, I should yet fail to present a portrait that would do justice to the charming original.

## MYSELF AND MY RELATIVES.

### CHAPTER XII.

#### I MOUNT A PONY.

THE next day was Sunday. Mr Legrand, being a Roman Catholic, drove in a tax-cart by himself to attend the nearest chapel where he could hear mass; while the rest of the party at Ripworth, with the exception of my uncle, who rarely attended divine worship, went off in the barouche to the pretty church of Yarcombe, where I had already been three times before. The village of Yarcombe was about two miles from Ripworth, and the church lay beyond the village. It was much larger than the church at Weston Cricket, and the congregation numerous and respectable. Colonel Danbeny's pew was a very grand one, cushioned and carpeted richly; and I must confess I felt a little proud of myself when I sat there, with people looking at me from the lower end of the edifice, no doubt thinking me something very superior. I was careful to appear always well dressed, with bonnets as much like those of Miss Gordon as I could afford to get; but I hope I was not guilty of the vulgarity of looking scornfully at the humble people who watched the great pew with respectful awe.

On this particular Sunday, we entered the church a little after the service had commenced, and the silk gowns of myself and companions no doubt created a mighty rustling as we softly moved up the gallery stairs, accompanied by Mr Goad. When we were all seated, I recollected when I had last seen Curzon Goad at church, and for a few moments was carried quite away from the scene before me. He was not like what he had formerly been. His countenance may still have had a thoughtful cast, but not of the old kind; now the expression was one of discontent, weariness, and a slight shade of bitterness. I sat on a line with him, but his head being turned my way, I had an opportunity of seeing his face, as he bent over the little book he held in his hand. Something odd about that book struck me, and I glanced at its pages. An undefined horror shot through me as I beheld that it was not a prayer-book, but a sort of written



account-book, with figures scored in it, and strange marks. Alas! I was far from good myself, but this sight was too much for me. I know I covered my face for a second or two with my handkerchief; and afterwards attended gravely to all the words spoken in the sacred edifice, while Curzon Goad went on with his strange study till the sermon began, and then he put his book up, and fixed his eyes on the ground.

When we left the church, I was not in good spirits, and the gaping and staring of the people who watched our party getting into the barouche failed to divert me. Jane Gordon and Mr Goad chatted all the way home; they laughed at the sermon and the preacher; criticised the dresses, noses, eyes, and figures of such of the congregation as they deemed worthy of notice, and appeared highly amused. It was a dusty, hot drive; and the noise of the great carriage-wheels, and the ceaseless trot of the horses, gave me a headache. I closed my eyes, and leaned back; and somehow or other, everything that was disagreeable seemed coming uppermost to my mind. My poverty-stricken home, my dependence on my uncle's bounty, the debts I owed already to the milliner at Yarcombe and some other trades-people, all rushed through my head. I was glad when we reached Ripworth. Mr Legrand just arrived when we did, and he was in time to assist me to alight. We all went in to luncheon, and Mr Legrand sat next me, helping me to the good things on the table, which I scarcely cared for. My uncle was in very good spirits this day, talking kindly to me, and asking when I had heard from my mother. Languid and depressed as I was, his attention soothed me. 'He will not desert my family, I am sure,' I thought. 'Mamma certainly judged him harshly.'

At dinner, he deputed Mr Legrand to take care of me, as on the day previous, and now I was able to behave with greater ease and grace than before. Nature had given me a pretty strong spirit of coquetry, and I was capable of pretending to be pleased with people when I was in reality indifferent to them. 'Women are never brought to account,' said I to myself, 'for trying to gain the affections of the other sex, so I need not be afraid of endeavouring to captivate Mr Legrand, even if I do not choose to marry him.' Upon this consideration, I now began to throw much of respect and interest into my manner towards this gentleman. My own sense taught me that Miss Gordon's way of flirting was not exactly judicious, though Curzon Goad seemed pretty fast in her chains, and I rather avoided all approaches to flattery. I scarcely knew what my views were; but the hope of being one day very rich, with numerous servants and equipages, was generally steady before my mental vision. When Mr Legrand bade us adieu that evening, I thought he very gently pressed my hand at parting, and I was pleased; yet there was a weight upon my heart too—a great weight; and when I slept, I dreamed of the little church of Weston Cricket.

Between Miss Gordon and me there was very little sympathy: she was accomplished, fashionable, and very entertaining in her conversation with strangers, but at home she spoke little. I was fond of reading; she never read at all, and took no interest in books. Her love of gaiety was not so great as might have been imagined, from the ennui she experienced when there was no prospect of a ball. Habit had rendered dissipation essential to her. The next time we met our friends from Harkslowe was on the day of a hunt, when the hounds were to throw off at Ripworth, and we had a hunt-breakfast, and a numerous assemblage at the Hall. Mr Legrand and Curzon Goad were dressed, of course, in hunting-costume, like everybody else, and Miss Gordon intended riding to see the sport.

'Will you not ride also, Miss Keppleton?' asked Mr Goad, seeing that I had not a habit on.

'I do not think I will,' I replied, colouring unfortunately.

'Oh, why not?' he asked. 'It is such a fine day. Miss Gordon, can you not persuade her to join your party?'

'Do you ride?' asked Jane, turning to me.

'I am not a very experienced horsewoman,' said I.

'We will have the gray pony out for her,' said my uncle, rubbing his hands. 'Ring the bell, Goad.'

'Pray, don't,' said I in a terrible fright. 'I did not bring a riding-habit here, and really I—'

'Order the gray pony to be saddled, Martin,' said my uncle to the servant who answered the bell; and then turning to Jane: 'You can lend her a habit, can you not?'

'If she does not wish to ride, why force her?' asked Jane.

'Oh, she is a little timid; that is all. Old Tom will take care that no accident will occur.'

Frightened as I felt, I was still resolved to ride that day; and when Jane gave me a habit and hat, I equipped myself with the feelings of a martyr. The only animal I had ever ridden was a donkey, but I fancied myself equal to managing a nobler steed. Very much, indeed, did I like my appearance in the hat and habit, although all colour had forsaken my cheeks. When I beheld the gray pony saddled for me at the hall door, I thought I should have fainted, but I struggled to keep up. The pony was small and quiet, perfectly trained, and not young; but even so, the trial was a fearful one. Jane's magnificent bay mare curvetted and capered as she mounted it, and this did not encourage me; yet up I got on the saddle as lightly as I could, scarcely touching with my foot the hand that Curzon Goad placed under it. There I was seated on high at last, the reins in my hand, my foot in the stirrup, and a very strong inclination possessing me to seize hold of the pommel! But death rather than disgrace! The assembling of the hunting-party, who had breakfasted at Ripworth, passed all unnoticed before me; I was only thinking of myself and my pony. It was a lovely morning, and Mr Goad was very kind as long as he remained with Jane and me. Once, when the pony shewed a disposition to hold its head sideways and become restive, he quietly took the reins and set it right, as if by magic. I was glad that he rode quite close to me as long as he remained of our party. Jane Gordon and I had also in attendance a respectable old groom, who was to take care of us when the gentlemen were obliged to leave us. I was not long in getting accustomed to the exercise, and in about twenty minutes was able to turn my head in speaking. I did not think Jane was in good-humour; I fear I bored her. Once or twice she said something about going after the hounds for a short way, if she could have done so; and I, I felt, was the only obstacle to this proceeding. We watched the hunt as far as we could with interest. The country was flat, the day clear, and away the horses flew in splendid style. Old Tom's delight in the sport amused me, as likewise his keen eyesight: now and then he would tell us where the fox was, when all I could see were the horsemen, and they but faintly.

'Now, ladies, look! See! there's Mr Goad going on first. Lor! how he jumped that hedge! Oh, bless us! if that isn't Mr Legrand pitched off like shot! And all the time I could not tell one horse from another.'

Mr Legrand had been thrown from his hunter, but not injured seriously, a bruised arm and shoulder being the extent of his damage. When he joined us later in the day, I betrayed some anxiety about his mishap, hoped he had not been hurt, and received the gratifying answer that he had not, but that, if he had, it would have been amply compensated for by drawing forth such kind inquiries from lips, &c. We all rode home together—that is, my uncle, Curzon Goad, and Mr Legrand—and I was just growing quite proud of being able to trot confidently, when,

most unhappily, Jane's horse began to prance, and all the other horses grew restive, tired as some of them were. In my fright, I pulled the reins so tight, that my pony followed the general example, and grew skittish. Never had I felt more inclined to scream, but pride kept me from it. Tighter and tighter did I pull the reins, till the pony fairly stood on its hind legs. How I kept from falling off, I know not. Everybody was alarmed. Curzon Goad called to me to keep my seat; and, dismounting himself with much presence of mind, reduced the little animal to a proper frame of mind. I thought he looked pale and agitated, as he said to me in a low tone: 'How I should have blamed myself if you had met with any accident!' and he rode close beside me for the rest of the way. Lingered behind the rest of the party, we were soon far from them, and for some time quite silent; when we spoke, our conversation was of a serious kind. He told me of places he had lately visited abroad, describing them so vividly, that I was much interested; and perhaps I betrayed my enthusiastic love of foreign countries and travellers' tales. I quite forgot my pony while listening to a thrilling account of an inn in Italy, where he passed a night under well-grounded apprehensions of being murdered before morning, though somehow he was not.

'Well, I never passed such a dull day!' said Jane, when we went up to dress for luncheon. 'And then your pony gave me such a fright; really papa was very wrong to insist on your riding it. You must not be forced to use it again.'

'Oh, indeed, Jane,' said I, 'I think riding very pleasant, and I hope soon to manage the pony better. I was very stupid to-day.'

Jane coughed, and without saying any more, left me.

#### CHAPTER XIII.

##### PERPLEXITY.

Several parties succeeded each other in the neighbourhood of Ripworth. Lady Vignolles gave a ball, and this was followed by many more given by other families. At last we had a grand fête at Ripworth, surpassing in magnificence all the previous entertainments in the county; for Uncle Daubeny was proud and a little pompous. The chief result to me of these festivities was my getting deeper and deeper into debt, though mamma sent me all the money she could spare, and my uncle also gave me a present of twenty pounds. But had I not fashionable perfumes to buy, and real lace trimmings, and costly ornaments of gold and precious stones? And could I, who soon found out I was an acknowledged belle, possibly appear at two balls in the same costume? The servants at Ripworth told me what people said of my being 'far and away' the handsomest lady in the county; and to corroborate their assertions, the attention I was paid wherever I appeared, rapidly increased. I was dazzled, elated, delighted. I speedily learned to dance all the fashionable dances by merely looking on at others engaged in them, and by practising in evenings when Mr Goad and Mr Legrand were at the Hall, as they now were very frequently. The society I mixed in was, of course, the highest in the county; and among my frequent partners, I could number more than one titled person. However, though some men of large fortune paid me marked attention, Uncle Mortimer did not encourage any of them. My letters home became, from end to end, filled with accounts of my triumphs and supposed conquests. Vanity was all I thought of from one week's end to the other. I forgot home, and mother, and brothers, and sisters, except so far as they could contribute to my gratification in wondering at my goings on in the gay world. My brother Edward's letters gave me no longer the pleasure they used to do; sometimes, if they were very long, I scarcely read them through. All the forethought I formerly possessed, appeared

to have vanished. I did not now reflect upon what was to be the end of this visit to Ripworth. Already four months had passed since I arrived there, and I was coquetting with Mr Legrand, flirting with some half-dozen others, and now and then trying to win over Mr Goad from his allegiance to Jane Gordon. That I felt happy, I cannot say; I was living in an excitement of a feverish, unhealthy kind. One day late in autumn, Jane said to me: 'I wonder how your mother can like to have you so long away from her. Is she quite contented at our keeping you here all this time?'

'Mamma never speaks of wishing me to leave Ripworth,' I replied colouring; 'but, indeed, my stay has been prolonged beyond all bounds.'

Hasty of temper, and indignant as I felt, I soon left the room, and endeavoured to find my uncle, but he was not in the house. I then went out to the grounds, to try and calm the vexed spirit within me. Brown leaves were flying about, squirrels hopping from tree to tree, black-birds whistling with a dreary wild whistle. Wounded pride hurt me sorely. At that moment, I would have left Colonel Daubeny's roof without a regret. I walked through my favourite strolling-places, glad when the wild wind cooled my cheek and forehead. Suddenly, at a short turning, I met Curzon Goad; he was returning from shooting.

'I did not know you were here,' I observed, when our first salutations were over.

'I came over to shoot early in the day,' he replied, 'and the colonel asked me to remain for dinner.'

'Miss Gordon is at home,' I said; 'are you going to the house?'

'Not yet. Where are you wandering to?'

'Taking a last look at some favourite haunts,' I replied, for my anger was hot still. 'I think of leaving Ripworth as soon as possible.'

For some moments Mr Goad was silent, then he joined me in my walk, and asked if I really intended quitting my uncle's house immediately.

'Yes,' said I; 'and surely I have remained long enough away from home.'

'That depends on your own feelings, I should say. A happy home must indeed be preferable to any place else, though I cannot speak from experience. I never knew what a home was, Miss Keppleton.'

There was a tone of despondency in these words that struck me forcibly. I raised my eyes to his face, and saw that he was pale and careworn-looking.

'Homes are not always happy,' said I sighing.

'Perhaps there is no happiness on earth,' returned my companion. 'I often wonder what the end and aim of many lives are; my own life, for instance, seems strangely devoid of meaning.'

I was a good deal surprised at Mr Goad's speaking thus, and my heart beat a little quicker than before, though I could scarcely tell why.

'You are the last person I would suspect of being discontented,' said I. 'Have you not so much in life to enjoy? You can do as you like, go where you like; you are unfettered and free.' I was thinking of my own position.

'Free!' he repeated; 'indeed, Miss Keppleton, I am not. No prisoner was ever in chains stronger than those that bind me. Just at present, I am the most miserable of men. You may smile, but I speak the truth.'

I did smile. 'You are in love, of course,' said I lightly.

He did not reply, and we walked on in silence for some time.

'And so you are really going so soon?' he said, after a long pause.

'Yes—perhaps to-morrow.'

'But then you will return soon.'

'It is not likely. I may not leave home for a long while again.'

'How we shall miss you here!' he said.

'Ah, I fear not,' returned I a little sadly: 'the absent are quickly forgotten.'

'Does Mr Legrand know of your intentions?' he asked somewhat abruptly.

'No; no one knows of them except yourself.'

Though I did not raise my eyes from the ground while speaking, I knew that my companion looked at me with some surprise.

'You think me incomprehensible?' I said, at length looking up at him, and smiling faintly.

'I have often thought so before,' he replied, and I fancied that there was a steady searching expression in his eye as it met mine. Courageous as I had become of late as regarded flirting, I was obliged to shrink from his glance. I felt uncomfortable.

'I daresay you have,' I returned; 'indeed, I scarcely comprehend myself.'

'You will think of your friends here sometimes, I trust,' he said in a low tone.

'O yes,' I replied quickly: 'many happy hours spent at Ripworth will long live in my memory.' Here I was playing the coquette, with a pretty firm persuasion that my companion was doing exactly the same thing.

'I wish I could say the same,' he said after a pause.

'Will you not remember any such hours?'

'Scarcely any. I have not been often happy at Ripworth for many weeks latterly.'

'Indeed? And yet you seemed happy.'

'Our life is made up of seemings and appearances; almost everything is false in the world.'

'How can you talk so? I am afraid something has lately occurred to make you think bitterly of life and the world.'

'I have looked gloomily on life for many years, Miss Keppleton. I never had any one to care for me. As a boy, I was the most lonely and desolate of beings.'

Back to the old Sundays long ago, when the sad-looking youth appeared in the little church at Weston Cricket, my thoughts wandered.

'And did you care for any one?' I asked a little sanely.

'No. How could I? My Uncle Newdegate, and my tutor, a clergyman at Weston Cricket, were the only people who interested themselves about me. But I wanted something more than interest: in short, nobody understood me.'

'Yet,' said I, 'I think when people complain of not being understood, they are often in fault themselves. They should speak out boldly, and say what they want to be known, without preserving mysterious silence on the subject.'

'You are right,' he said, in a voice strangely agitated. 'Oh, Miss Keppleton, if I could only bring myself to speak the truth out boldly, now and for ever!'

I looked at him; his face was deadly pale, almost corpse-like.

'Love,' he continued, 'has been declared to be a feeling stronger than any other, but never believe it; the dread of disgrace, the fear of dishonour, is still stronger.'

I could not bring myself to ask what he meant by this strange burst; I dreaded I knew not what. All at once, new feelings in my own heart made me tremble. How this interview might have terminated I cannot say, had not Uncle Daubeny appeared on the scene to interrupt our  *tête-à-tête* . The sight of him recalled all my late vexation, and my cheek flushed as I asked him if I could see him alone for a little time before dinner.

'O yes, my dear,' he replied, while his eyes opened widely for an instant, and a gleam of pleasure flashed in them—a strange wild gleam. I then left the gentlemen, saying I would see Uncle Daubeny at six o'clock in the library.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## ILLNESS.

'Colonel Daubeny,' said I, when I met him at the appointed time, 'I wish to inform you of my intention of leaving Ripworth as early as possible.'

A change passed over my uncle's face; the brow lowered.

'Leave Ripworth!' he repeated; 'and for what reason?'

'Because I feel I have already trespassed upon your hospitality too long. Others think so as well as myself.'

Now the colonel's face grew unmistakably pale, and I saw his hand, holding a book, tremble.

'My dear girl, you are mistaken. Nobody dare think that Ripworth shall not be your home as long as I please. Are you not my sister's child, near to me almost as a daughter of my own?' And the reserved, proud man, always so incomprehensible to me, took my hand in both his own, pressing it gently. O mother, did you judge this brother harshly?

'You have been very kind to me,' I said in a softened tone—'oh, so kind; and I thank you from my heart, but it seems only right that I should return home without delay. I have forgotten myself here.'

'You shall not go,' said he impressively. 'No, my dear, I must not let you leave my house as long as you are Miss Keppleton.'

I blushed, without feeling at all pleased. Young girls may like flirting and admiration well enough, but the proud among them rarely appreciate their friends disposing of them in matrimony merely as a kind of provision for them.

'You will stay here, child, till you leave Ripworth for a home perhaps better worthy of you.'

Colonel Daubeny was certainly the master of the Hall, and if he chose to have me there, what need I care for anybody else wishing me away? I thanked him gratefully for his kindness, and promised that I would not think of returning yet to Weston Cricket. I could not help being cold to Miss Gordon, and on that evening I would not permit her maid to assist me in my toilet.

Mr Goad, to my surprise, did not appear at dinner that evening; I was told that business of an important kind at Harkslowe had summoned him away. Late at night, I found a little note on my dressing-table, containing these words:

'DEAR MISS KEPPLETON—I uttered some hasty sentences this evening which I regret, but I know you will not mention them when I request you not to do so. I was excited by circumstances which have just occurred. I am in a maze of difficulties of every kind, with no hope of extricating myself, but I must not write more. All I ask of you is to forget our last interview, and to burn this note. C. G.'

Into the fire, in my bedroom, went the note as soon as read, and an angry flush warmed all my face. I sat up till very far in the long October night, and it was only by chance that I recollected that a letter from home had arrived by the evening post. It was from my sister Anna, and ran thus:

'MY DEAR JESSIE—We have been anxiously looking out for a letter from you for some weeks, and trust nothing serious has occurred to prevent our getting one. What a delightful life you must be leading at Ripworth! All the pleasure we have is in reading of your doings there. Rosa is very anxious to know what the gardener at Uncle Daubeny's says of geranium cuttings and anemone roots, which you have forgotten to mention in your two last letters. Mr Horne was here a few days ago, lecturing us all round as usual. He was rather melancholy on account of having heard some bad news of that young man Curzon Goad, whom he educated, and who seems a constant visitor at Ripworth. Now, be on your guard against the same



personage, as he is dishonourable, and a spendthrift, and I don't know what all besides. He leads a very wicked life, gambling, betting, and breaking his poor old uncle's heart. Mr Horne heard it all from good authority, as he was at Mr Newdegate's house lately, and he would have gone to see you, only his spirits were so low. Mr Horne heard that it was not probable Mr Goad would inherit his uncle's property, and that he was engaged to some heiress in your neighbourhood. It is well you never seemed to fancy him. Do you think Uncle Daubeny will send mamma money soon, as indeed our funds are very low? Mamma begs me to ask you for L5, if you have it to spare, to pay the baker, who is rather pressing, and growing impatient. O Jessie, is not poverty hard to bear? The bills coming to the door make my heart faint every day. I am afraid our servants are growing very discontented. They complain of their food, and their not getting beer, and there is a man in the kitchen very often. Rachel says it is Betsy's brother, but one never believes in these brothers. Rosa was crying all day because the Webbs' pigs came into the garden and rooted up all the dahlia roots; but we must try and get them set to rights again. Dear Jessie, you know I have little pleasant news to write, so excuse a dull letter. Ever your affectionate sister,

'ANNA KEPPLETON.'

I read the letter all through, in a state of nervousness almost painful. Home and all its dark poverty came vividly before me—more vividly than it had come for many, many weeks—and then that news about Curzon Goad! Thoughtlessness, levity, extravagance, I could tolerate—but dishonour, never. Many thoughts were swallowed up in the agony I felt at not possessing a sovereign in the world to send to my mother. All night I felt excited, almost wild. In the morning, I was ill, feverish; my brain burned, my eyes were stiffened in their sockets. It was the beginning of a long illness, one that made me lie like a senseless block of wood for many a weary day and night. Like a dream to me now is the memory of that illness, when I saw things real and unreal all mixed up together; when the visions of diseased fancy and the actual presence of friends appeared all alike. I saw the doctor, Jane, my uncle, and the comely, hearty nurse that waited on me, all quite distinctly, moving in and out occasionally, or stooping to look at me. But I saw other forms that were not there, other sights that appeared to no other eyes than mine—spectral figures grinning at me, skeletons to whose bones no flesh clung. Nothing pleasant came before my fancy; all was horrible, frightful; and I trembled in the lonely nights when the watch-light burned, and the nurse dozed on the couch beside my bed. Those spectres seemed to beckon me to another world—a world not bright or beautiful, but where darkness reigned—night, everlasting night, without star or moon. The spectres beckoned in vain; in mercy, I was spared.

#### EIDER-DOWN.

AMONG substances combining warmth with lightness, eider-down stands pre-eminent. It is this quality that has made the eider-down quilt such a comfort in the sick-room, and luxury in the travelling-carriage. But by far the greater proportion of the so-called eider-down found in shops is either not genuine, or of a very inferior quality. To have a quilt made to perfection, no down should be used but that which has been taken from the nest, and which the female has plucked from her own breast. The probable reason of the superiority of this live-down, as it is called, to the dead-down, or that which is taken from the dead bird, is, that all the down on its breast is not ripe at one time, and that the hen instinctively plucks only that which is ready; for the young down,

which begins almost immediately to grow again, does not arrive at maturity till the following year. The down which is taken from the dead bird is of rather an oily nature, and has an unpleasant smell about it. In Lincolnshire, the farmers' wives always pluck the live geese about June, a practice which, however cruel it may appear to be, is not so in reality, as that down which is ripe is quite loose in the skin, and comes away very easily.

Formerly, a large quantity of eider-down used to be imported from Spitzbergen and Russia, but mostly of an inferior quality. To an inexperienced eye, it may be difficult to distinguish between the live and dead down, but there are one or two characteristic marks which infallibly test the quality of the article: not only is the live-down much the lighter and more elastic of the two, but if a handful of it be thrown up into the air, even when a tolerably fresh breeze is blowing, it will adhere together in a compact mass, and not a particle of it be lost, whilst the other will be scattered in all directions, like so much thistle-seed; or if it be placed before a fire, it will be seen to rise and expand in bulk very rapidly, which is not the case with the other. The quantity of live-down requisite for an average-sized quilt is from two and a half to three pounds, which may with ease be so compressed as to be contained in a common-sized hat. If more be used, the object is defeated, as the down then becomes lumpy, and collects in the middle. Twenty-five years ago, it was no uncommon thing for small vessels to bring from five thousand to six thousand pounds of eider-down from Spitzbergen to Hammerfest, in Lapland, chiefly, it is true, of an inferior quality, and that by no means improved by lying in the hold for a month or six weeks.

During the latter part of the last century, Iceland alone used to export to Denmark from two hundred to three hundred pounds of cleaned down, and from fifteen thousand to twenty thousand pounds uncleaned. The birds have, however, been exposed to such unfair treatment in that island, spite of the laudable endeavours that many individuals have made to propagate the species, and the protective measures adopted by the Danish government, that they have very considerably decreased in numbers; for not only have the nests been robbed of their eggs and down two or three times during the hatching-season, but the birds themselves have been shot in a merciless manner, as well for the sake of their feathers as for the flesh. For instance, if A sees a duck, he shoots it, on the principle that B should not get it; B acts from similar motives with regard to C; and so on till it comes to Z's turn, who does just the same as the others, for fear A should return; and as the eider-duck is the easiest of all ducks to kill during the breeding-time, when they will, in fact, sit so close that they may be knocked on the head with a stick, it is not much to be wondered at that they have diminished very seriously on this island. In Norway, however, they have been jealously preserved; and not only has the Storting recently passed a law, rendering every one who shoots one of these birds, or robs a nest, amenable to a fine, but they are especial favourites with the peasants; indeed, along the whole coast of Norway, where they annually resort in great numbers, they are held as dear by the natives as the robin-redbreast is with us; and this principle proves a far more efficient means of protection than any fine or penalty. Generally speaking, they build their nests on the small islands with which the whole Norwegian coast is so plentifully sprinkled; but very frequently they will repair to the mainland, building close to the farmhouses and fishermen's cottages, even under the very door-steps, as if they knew that they were among friends. In such cases, they become as tame as farmyard ducks, suffering the good-wife to lift them off the nest, and receiving food at her hand. And yet, notwithstanding all the care that has been taken of

them, they have greatly diminished, and it is to be feared still continue to do so every year.

The principal breeding-places of the eider-duck are the coasts of Greenland, Spitzbergen, Iceland, Norway, the Farøe Islands, and the Hebrides. As mentioned above, they usually select small remote islands, called *Aegge-Vær*,\* for their breeding-places. These *Aegge-Vær* very considerably enhance the value of the property to which they are attached. About the end of February or beginning of March, the birds repair to the open sea along the coast in large flocks. The male bird seldom pairs before the third year—some naturalists say not before the fifth—but the female obtains a mate when she is one year old. The call of the male with which he woos his mate is exceedingly melodious. Bloody and severe are the battles fought amongst the male birds at this season; twenty may perhaps be seen all at once fighting desperately for the possession of one hen, who swims all the time quietly along behind the combatants, waiting till the contest has been decided, when the fortunate bird immediately claims her as his prize. When once his superiority has been thus publicly asserted, he suffers no further molestation. This important business of finding a husband being at length satisfactorily settled, the female selects a convenient place in which to build her nest, choosing generally the protection of an overhanging rock, or the shelter of a juniper-bush, which latter shrub is found in great abundance. The nest is formed, on the outside, of birch twigs, next to which comes a layer of moss or soft grass; and the inside is lined with the down which she plucks from her breast, mixed with switch-grass.

She lays generally from five to eight eggs, according to her age. She sits on them very assiduously, plucking from time to time fresh down from her breast, which she heaps up so as to form a high embankment round them, and to hide her from view while on the nest. When she leaves the nest in search of food, she covers up the eggs with the loose down, as the male bird takes no share in the process of incubation. If the nest be robbed of its eggs, she will, in common with other birds of the duck tribe, lay more; but supposing that the first five are taken, she will lay only three the next time; and if these be again removed, she will only lay one egg. A traveller in Iceland says that he has been informed 'that these birds lay quantities of eggs, and that it is usual to stick a short piece of wood, of about a foot and a half long, through the nest, and that the duck will keep on laying till the top of the stick is hidden by the eggs, and that then she mounts up on the top, and begins sitting.' The author, however, seems inclined to doubt the veracity of this statement! It is usual amongst the Icelanders to take the down and the eggs twice, as a matter of course, before the bird is allowed to sit; but after making her nest for the third time, she is so nearly bare, that the male bird has now to contribute towards the stock from his own breast. Should the nest be robbed again, they quit the place, and never return to it. The process of incubation takes from four to five weeks. Their food consists principally of mussels, shrimps, slugs, and crabs. Pontoppidan asserts 'that they are able to dive to a depth of ten to twelve fathoms.' But while feeding, they are subject to great annoyances from the numerous tribes of gulls, which, not being able to dive, avail themselves of their labours, and the moment the duck reappears on the surface with a shrimp or slug in its mouth, pounce down, and carry it off. While sitting, their great enemies are the crows and ravens, which some of the country-people declare will pull the female off the nest to get at the eggs.

Some of the principal *Aegge-Vær* along the

Norwegian coast belong to the Lofoden group, and are also to be found in the Varanger Fiord, a little to the east of the North Cape. The last-mentioned places are the property of the Amtman of Finmark, who farms them out, receiving his rent in kind from the tenant—namely, five hundred pounds of half-cleaned down, and two barrels of cloud-berries (*Rubus chamaemorus*). About twenty-five years ago, the produce from these *Aegge-Vær* was about two hundred pounds of clean down; now it is little more than half that quantity, though every possible care and precaution is taken to protect the birds from injury. Not a gun is allowed to be fired off within three miles of the breeding-places, except once a year, when four reindeer out of a herd belonging to the British vice-consul at Hammerfest and the proprietor are shot; on which occasions, an experienced Lapp is brought off from the mainland, with whom to miss would be an indelible disgrace. Moreover, no one is allowed to land there without special leave from the proprietor.

When the time approaches for the eggs to be hatched, people are kept on the watch; for the down ought to be taken before twenty-four hours have elapsed from the time when the young ones leave the shell, and should rain fall on it, it is spoiled.

On an average, each nest yields about one ounce of cleaned down. As soon as all the down has been taken from the nests, the grass and dirt are carefully picked out with the hand; but there are always so many broken pieces of birch twigs intermixed with it, that recourse is had to another expedient. The down is either spread out to the influence of the sun, the heat of which is great in those northern latitudes, or else slowly baked in ovens. The twigs thus become quite brittle. The down is next laid on smooth boards, and rolled with a heavy rolling-pin, which treatment effectually breaks up the brittle wood, and reduces it to dust. It is next placed on a frame in shape something resembling a French bedstead, across the bottom of which are arranged laterally pieces of packthread, at intervals of about one-quarter of an inch, and is stirred quickly backwards and forwards with two light wooden wands. The dust and dirt thus fall through on to a board which is placed underneath, and the process is repeated until no more is found to come away.

The down is now ready for use, and is stored up in bags for exportation or sale. The whole process is very tedious, and is the more felt to be so, as in the short northern summer there are so many other necessary things to be attended to.

The unclean down will not yield quite one-sixth clean, the value of which will be about twelve shillings on the spot. Owing, however, to the alarming diminution in the numbers of the birds, no dependence can be placed on obtaining any considerable quantity.

As above stated, a very large quantity of down used to be exported from Iceland, but entirely for the Danish market. In the year 1750, the company in that island sold as large a quantity as amounted to 3745 banco dollars. The relative value of clean and uncleaned down in those days may be ascertained from the following computation, that the former was valued at forty-five fish per one pound, and the latter at sixteen fish per one pound.

The earliest mention that I can find of eider-down in any English writings occurs in *The Description of Europe and the Voyages of Othere and Wulfstan*, by Alfred the Great. Othere, who was a Norwegian nobleman, speaking of the Fins and Biarmians, says that the revenues of the nobles 'chiefly consisted in skins of animals, down, and whalebone,' and that 'some of the richest proprietors had to pay as much as forty bushels of down.'

The use of eider-down was believed, in the early part of the last century, to be excessively injurious to

\* *Vær* is a reef of rocks above water.

the health, producing epileptic seizures, which opinion is refuted by Bartholin, a Danish writer on medicine, who says: 'Neither ought that idle report to frighten us that epilepsy is brought on by the use of these feathers. No one that I have ever met with or heard of has ever incurred any risk thereby.'—*Vid. In Med. Danorum Domesticâ*, p. 66. Still, all those who have travelled on the continent know the oppressiveness which is caused by having to sleep with a feather-bed thrown over one, a practice which cannot be conducive to health.

### MELIBŒUS UPON GRATUITOUS EXHIBITIONS BY NIGHT.

'WHAT a grand thing is your London gas, sir!' said Melibœus, as we were one evening walking together to Wheelbarrow Hall, Green Street, to dine with the Benevolent Costermongers. 'What a capital substitute for and great improvement upon the sun! How much more constant, and to be depended upon! How much more under control!'

'It smells a little sometimes,' observed I drily.

'I like a slight smell of gas,' returned the indomitable Melibœus: 'it reminds me of happy faces, charming dresses, of love; and wit, and pathos, all together—in a word, of the theatre. I seem to see the elder Kean whenever I come across a broken gas-pipe, just as the poets are transported to their beloved pastoral scenes by the scent of a cowslip. We have plenty of cowslips at Bullock Smithy, but, alas, neither gas nor actors!'

'For my part, Melibœus, there is no greater punishment to me in this summer weather, than to sweat, as Cowper elegantly expresses it, in a crowded theatre. How you can do so, night after night, as you do, surprises me. It would ruin a London man's constitution, beside exhausting his purse.'

'But a London man,' persisted my friend, 'may see dramas enough in London streets by night without paying for them.'

'Very, very sad ones, Melibœus.'

'True, my friend; albeit, if it be not wrong to say so—wrong to speak as a mere spectator of the wretchedness in which so many thousands of our fellow-creatures, and those the least able to bear it, are plunged—there is a sort of grandeur in the immensity of that gilded misery which throngs London streets by night. The flaring gin-palace shines at a little distance like a fairy bower; the dancing saloons overflow—to us without—with the music of the spheres; and the sparkling throngs that stream forth from the operas and theatres, might almost persuade one, if one looked no nearer, that happiness was really composed of some such materials as these.'

Thus speaking, Melibœus waved his hand over Metropolitan space, and it came in contact with a gentleman with a paper lantern on his head instead of a hat, most brilliantly illuminated, and affording information in large type concerning the whereabouts of the *Poses Plastiques* or *Tableaux Vivants* that night, 'which,' said the hat, 'reverse the miracle of Pygmalion, and bring home to us, in flesh and blood, the greatest efforts of Grecian art.'

'Hullo!' exclaimed this exponent of classicalism, 'be you a Preacher, that you chuck about your fingers, and takes a poor fellow's living away by putting out his farthing dip?'

The ready hand of Melibœus, with a shilling in it,

here met the speaker's palm, and changed the current of his speech. 'I thank ye, sir, and beg your pardon that I mistook you for a preacher; they often takes a poor chap's shilling, but'—

A moving mass of people here intervened, and prevented further discourse between Melibœus and his friend, whom we perceived afar off, like a little lighthouse contending with the human wave.

'I should like to have had some talk with that man too,' said my companion; 'I think I could set him right in some of his opinions. What are these *Poses Plastiques*? Mrs M. does a little modelling herself, and I think would rather like to see them.'

'I think, Melibœus, that you had very much better not take her,' said I with seriousness; and yet I could scarcely help laughing in his ingenuous countenance. What very odd mistakes a country gentleman may make in London, and one who is by no means foolish either! The most respectable elderly lady whom I ever knew used to frequent the Elysian Gardens, Battersea, daily, during her stay in town, under the idea that they were of a similar character to those at Chiswick; and, indeed, nothing can exceed the propriety, I may even say the supernatural dullness, of the Elysian Gardens until after nightfall.

'Did you ever eat a periwinkle?' inquired Melibœus, stopping at an illuminated stall upon the pavement devoted to the sale of that delicacy. 'I had some in Hungerford Market yesterday, and found them very good.'

I stared at Melibœus,

Like some watcher of the skies,  
When a new planet swims into his ken.

'And how did you get them out of their shells?'

'Well, that was my only difficulty,' replied he, frankly; 'for although there were some already picked in a saucer, I was suspicious of them, because the only implement used for their extraction by the mermaid who retailed them was a black hair-pin!'

Melibœus felt me shudder, as I leaned upon his arm.

'My dear fellow,' expostulated he, 'what can be less open to suspicion than an unpicked periwinkle? I got them out myself with my scarf-pin. Won't you have one or two? They would be as good as oysters as a preparative for the Costermongers' banquet, and infinitely more delicate.'

I hurried Melibœus away, with my appetite for the expected dainties in Wheelbarrow Hall already seriously diminished.

'Stop,' cried he; 'oh, do stop a moment, and look in his umbrella!'

He referred to a vendor of periodicals and song-books, whose shop consisted of a very large inverted specimen of that *genus*—what is termed, in fact, a Gig umbrella—elegantly lit up on five of its spokes by as many candles, and presenting to the eyes of Melibœus an overwhelmingly attractive spectacle. This Mudie of the pavement was smoking a short pipe, and perusing an illustrated journal with one eye, while he kept his other fixed upon his wares.

'Buy a Warbler, buy a Murderous Narrative, buy a halphabet for the young,' observed he persuasively; 'or buy,' added he, perceiving that Melibœus had a Paterfamilial air—'buy this invaluable work upon receipts and recipes, which makes a doctor unnecessary, and a cook altogether superfluous.' However, Melibœus purchased the murderous narrative, as being the most exciting example of the stock on hand, the opening sentences of which, too, promised him much novelty in the way of grammar and construction.

We turned into one of those quiet streets inhabited by the junior aristocracy, who, when their fathers retire to more limited mansions underground, will, in their turn, reside in the vast palaces of the square into which it leads; a street of expectations, narrow,



indeed, itself, but with outlets and prospects of great splendour.

'Do you know, Melibœus, that for each of these dolls' houses there is as much money given, *per annum*, as you could get for your fine place at Bullock Smithy, with the shooting and fishing included?'

'Not more?' returned Melibœus, raising his eyebrows. 'Is it possible? Do you think, then, that I could effect an exchange? But what is that exquisite music?'

'There is a German band in the square, and a hurdy-gurdy in the Mews—and, of course, no policeman.'

'Hush!' exclaimed Melibœus; 'both are exquisite; and their notes, which here circulate with the atmosphere, would be exchanged for valuable coin anywhere in the country; but listen, there is a duet, and only one man singing it!'

He spoke truth. The footmen—who in such streets as these pass their lifetime outside the doors, and for whose magnificent proportions the houses are indeed altogether inadequate—were lounging in attitudes of fashionable attention, with one arm carelessly thrown around an under-housemaid; even the balconies were laden with members of the junior aristocracy, who had not yet retired to dress for dinner. One of those singular beings who are so fortunate as to possess two vocal organs—a bass and a treble—was executing a melody of the affections, now in a male, and now in a female voice. It was certainly a very ingenious performance. I was myself a little in doubt when he was wooing and when he was being wooed—when he was Rudolph and when he was Anna; but then I have no ear for music.

'If that man should chance to come down to Bullock Smithy,' cried Melibœus with enthusiasm, 'he would be advertised there as a new wonder of the world. Listen to that shake of his in'—  
'Death of the Pope of, Death of the Pope of Rome, Death of the Pope of Rome this afternoon at three!' broke in a trio of street-patterers. I was about to place my fingers in my ears, for that nasal glee was worse than the combined discordance of the other sounds, when Melibœus held his hands up in token of excessive satisfaction. 'How truly admirable,' cried he, 'is this method of imparting political information! What are even the penny-newspapers in comparison with them as a cheap medium for the dissemination of knowledge? I stand here and acquire, for nothing, the very latest intelligence from the capital of distant Italy.'

Melibœus would have purchased one of these veracious Roman chronicles, but for a succession of Hansom cabs—Nature's carriage nobility, as my friend terms them, which also omit not to bear their coronets upon their panels—each carrying forth a child of fashion 'got up' to within an inch of his life, as the saying is, and with the folding-doors swung back for air, as well perhaps as to afford the public an uninterrupted view of his personal gorgeousness. 'How nobly impassive are these scions of fashion!' exclaimed Melibœus; 'they are going out to the most splendid banquets, but they have no vulgar appetites. They are enjoying the most delightful of locomotive sensations, and yet—Heavens, what a glorious vision! And certainly, as my companion thus interrupted himself, a rather startling phenomenon did sweep meteor-like before our eyes—a private Hansom, driven by an unexceptionable coachman, and containing two female aristocrats, manifestly going out to dinner. The splendour of their appearance was enhanced rather than diminished by a sort of Venetian blind or veil, intended to debar the public from the contemplation of what was within, but happily not of sufficiently thick material. Obstruction, like ambition, should be made of sterner stuff. It was indeed a gratuitous exhibition of the most enchanting character.

'I am thankful,' cried Melibœus, pursuing with his eyes this heavenly body far longer than his domestic

position justified, 'I am thankful that Mrs M. did not see *that*. I am sure I should have had no rest until I had exchanged her pony-carriage for a vehicle of that description.'

We met many other splendid conveyances with occupants to match, both which would at any other time have excited Melibœus to eloquence; but the private Hansom revolved ceaselessly in his mind until we reached the Hall of Benevolent Costermongers.

'Rightly, indeed, are they called Benevolent,' exclaimed my friend, producing the card that admitted him as well as myself to the entertainment without payment; 'this "price one guinea" in the corner here is a mere form, which courtesy has adopted in order to forbid the sense of obligation. I look upon these public dinners as the culmination of your gratuitous exhibitions.'

'Somebody pays for them,' said I, 'you may depend upon that, Melibœus.'

'Perhaps,' returned he, 'but it is certainly nobody who suffers for it. The Board, or the Guild, or the Society, or the impalpable Something or other defrays all the actual expenses, while the donations—the charitable gifts, to obtain which the affair is organised, and in comparison with which its cost is a mere fleabite—are elicited from two classes of persons, who are by "natural selection," as well as by "the eternal fitness of things," designed for that especial purpose—the Rich and the Intoxicated. Wealthy people come to such repasts with their cheque-books in their pockets, with the praiseworthy intention and calm resolve of being bled; while others, overcome with eloquence, champagne, the best impulses of our nature, and the immediate vicinity of the aristocracy, pay the just penalty of their enthusiasm. What a splendid hall, and how elegantly decorated! Are all those gentlemen with ivory circlets at their button-holes the Stewards, I wonder, and can they tell us where we are to sit?'

Before I could prevent him, for Melibœus is precipitate in all his movements, he had inquired of one of these individuals—ticked with the figure 67, but I am confident very much exceeding that age—whereabouts might be the places set apart for us two eminent persons.

'You must hark the Honorary Sec., sir,' was the confidential reply—'the gent. with the white ribband in his coat under the gallery, as is being badgered to death a'ready by the rest of the hairistocracy.'

This old gentleman, although but a hired waiter, was a humorist, and had a considerable talent hidden under his napkin. By the judicious outlay of one shilling, I made this man our friend for the entire evening. He took our zephyr coats and umbrellas (about which latter article, when out of his sight, Melibœus suffers the greatest apprehensions), and intrusted them to an official appointed for that purpose, with particular instructions as to their safety. He removed our names from the locality which they occupied at one of the dining-tables, subject to an objectionable draught, after having (as he averred, and we put ourselves into his hands with an unquestioning confidence) obtained the permission of the Honorary Sec. for the alteration, to another place close to one of the vice-presidents, where the wine, he assured us, was sure to be of a better quality, and would circulate only among the vice and four of his neighbours. There was a slight commotion at the commencement of the repast in the vicinity of our original location, in consequence of some dissatisfaction expressed by Lord Charles Fitz Jessamine and his friend with their position, but it was, I am glad to say, promptly suppressed, and Melibœus and I feasted unmolested, with No. 67 standing behind us like a body-servant of our own. The opinions of mankind with respect to the goodness or badness of a Public Dinner depend upon the rank which each man holds in society, their seats at table being

regulated by that important circumstance. The half-dozen of people about the president and vice-presidents consider that the wine is really excellent for the money, and wonder how plovers' eggs can be procured at the price in such profusion. But immediately beyond these (literally) charmed circles there is contraction of brows, and pursing of lips, and audible doubts as to whether there isn't British brandy in that sherry. Melibœus, for instance, was delighted with everything, and would have rained round beneficent influences, like another Sun, upon all about him. But the next man upon his right, who did not partake of our vice-president's bottle, was not to be thawed by any genial attempts at conversation, but protested that the salmon was 'white, sir, positively white, upon my sacred honour,' and that the pine-apple ice had salt in it. The very *carte*, which was highly ornamented, delighted Melibœus, who subsequently took it away with him, with the intention, as I believe, of sticking it in the chimney-glass of his *sanctum* at Bullock Smithy, to astonish the natives, and not, as he averred, for the benefit and improvement of his *chef de cuisine*.

'Why, here,' remarked he, 'is the whole science of cookery in gilt letters, and, for those who want it, an admirable example and compendium of the French language.'

'Grass,' observed No. 67, handing us the asparagus. It was not a very admirable example of the English language, but we forgot the vulgarity of the speech in the delicacy of the attention.

'Asparagus, too, is a very long word to say over and over again across people's shoulders,' said Melibœus in further extenuation, 'and it is not like English. It has a sort of bastard classical sound, which is certainly not the case with sparrow-grass and its diminutive. A waiter who has no French accent must be sorely tried by having to pronounce such a *carte* as this, and doubtless gladly refreshes himself with a word like "grass." You see he will not have another chance till he gets to marrow-puddings, a couple of courses off. I shall certainly taste those marrow-puddings. Our ancestors, who did such valiant deeds, were nourished, I have read, by food of that description.'

If eating provokes to valour, Melibœus was certainly qualifying himself for the most heroic achievements. Neither was he backward, I am bound to confess, with the sparkling vintage of Champagne.

'What a wonderful place is this London of yours!' exclaimed he presently, 'where for twopence—did you not say twopence?—[He was referring to a conversation which passed between us several days before]—ice like this is placed beside you from the gelid lakes of North America, from the frozen steppes of'—

I am thankful to say that Melibœus was here interrupted and recalled to a sense of his situation by Grace, which was 'performed' by sixteen voices.

'What a charming gratuitous entertainment!' observed my friend, with tears in his eyes.

Presently he began to swell the harmony with his own voice.

'Melibœus,' said I sternly, 'be quiet. Your mission was to eat your dinner, the mission of these gentlemen is to return thanks for it. Respect one of the wisest canons of political economy—namely, the division of labour.'

Then the noble chairman (of course he was noble) gave us toasts as felicitously as such melancholy things (reminding one in their intellectual flavour, I think, of toast and water, more than anything else) can be given by anybody; and then came the health of the evening—the Prosperity of the Benevolent Costermongers. In the course of his introduction to this subject, the noble chairman reviewed the events of the last half-dozen centuries, and pointed out how civilisation had increased during that period in

consequence of the efforts of the society in question, the good of which he was confident every man there present had at his inmost heart, and consulted next to that of his own family, if not before it. During the peroration, which was made up in about equal parts of quotations from balance-sheets and poems of the affections, Melibœus was deeply affected. He was wound up to high subscription-pitch. He fumbled feebly about in his breast-pocket for something which I had already taken the precaution to secure.

Melibœus was not intoxicated; far from it; he could have gone through his facings accurately as a volunteer, or could have enunciated 'The country is truly rural' with distinctness, but he was not in a proper condition to sign cheques. He had only a couple of sovereigns about him, and he could get nothing out of me in the way of loan. His endeavour to borrow a five-pound note of his right-hand neighbour was entirely futile, and treated with contempt, and even suspicion. It was quite a relief to me when No. 67 bent down and whispered in my ear: 'There's a tremendous fire broke out Southwark way, sir; don't you think your friend would like to see it?'

'Fi—fi—fire!' ejaculated Melibœus with great excitement.

'Ah, my friend, Fie, fie, indeed,' returned I. 'If you were to take another glass of wine, you would take too much. Let us go at once.'

In a couple of minutes, we were in a four-wheel, driving rapidly towards the scene of the calamity.

'How nice and fresh the air is!' remarked Melibœus; 'I had no idea that it was so early. What a magnificent sunset!'

'The sun does not usually set in the east, Melibœus,' remarked I reprovingly; and I saw a glow which was not from the conflagration, pass over the ingenuous countenance of my friend. 'It is a fire, and a great fire; we are about to see the grandest gratuitous exhibition which even London has to offer.'

#### BEFORE HARVEST.

THE cuckoo and the nightingale have fled,  
And the red poppy blows amongst the corn;  
The wild-rose has its scented petals shed;  
And the green haw now shews upon the thorn;  
The bearded barley crooks its slender neck,  
Its thick'ning juice the sun matures so well,  
The rapid growth receives a ripening check,  
And on the rustling straw the good ears swell.  
No more the voice of migratory bird  
Gladdens the fulness of the evening shade,  
Yet is the broken song at morning heard  
Of native songster in the sheltering glade,  
Teaching the growing brood, by wise degrees,  
The trills and whistles, which, when joined, compose  
The melody that never fails to please.  
For from the spring of love it first arose.  
Now do the fruits of labour please the eye,  
And fill with joy the patient rustic's heart;  
Fields of rich corn nod as we pass them by,  
Fruit-weighted boughs bend to the market-cart.  
These, for thy wintry days of toil, thy early care,  
O happy tiller of the grateful ground,  
Be thy reward! these sights, so passing fair,  
That everywhere within our land abound.—C. E.

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